

VETERANS & SENIORS COMMITTEE

Of the

Suffolk County Legislature

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Veterans & Seniors Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the

William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway,
Smithtown, New York, on June 8, 2006.

Members Present:

Legislator Steven H. Stern, Chairman

Legislator Jack Eddington, Vice•Chair

Legislator Cameron Alden

Legislator John M. Kennedy, Jr.

Legislator Elie Mystal

Also In Attendance:

Ian Barry, Assistant Counsel to the Legislature

Richard K. Baker, Deputy Clerk

Verna Donnan, Budget Review Office

Deborah Harris, Aide to Legislator Stern

Fran Siems, Presiding Officer's Office

Holly Rhodes•Teague, Director/Office for the Aging

Tom Ronayne, Director of Veterans Service Agency

Brendan Chamberlain, County Executive's Office

Greg Fischer, Americans for Legal Reform

Dennis Brown, County Attorney's Office

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Lucia Braaten • Court Stenographer

[THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:14 A.M.]

CHAIRMAN STERN:

We'll get going, have the committee come to order. Legislator Alden will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

[SALUTATION]

I'll ask everybody remain standing and we'll observe a moment of silence, keeping the very brave men and women fighting for our freedoms here, overseas, around the world, in our thoughts and prayers.

[MOMENT OF SILENCE]

Thank you. We have some items on the agenda, but I have a card here, public portion, Greg Fischer. Mr. Fischer, welcome.

MR. FISCHER:

Thank you. My name is Greg Fischer. I'm a resident of Calverton. I'm also here speaking on behalf of Americans for Legal Reform. With the kindness and commitment of Mr. Mystal, we have a Memorializing Resolution going in this afternoon before Health and Human Services, that Resolution is Number 34. That resolution is in support of Assembly Bill 10436. It concerns Veterans, so I just come to bring this to your attention.

The Assembly bill is to make it so that military deployment is not a factor in child custody matters, because, at the moment, military deployment is on occasion being construed as abandonment and as neglect and unfitness for parenthood, and, therefore, deployed military personnel are having their rights removed as parents in Family Court should not be an issue.

And I provided a letter to all the members of the committee in their box. They can read it at their leisure. Military personnel have divorce rates up over 50% since 2000. The divorce rate is astronomical. And we have to protect our military personnel from the Family Courts in this area and we have to protect our children. So this is very important legislation and I intend to run it around Albany on the passage of the Memorializing Resolution. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Before we move down the agenda, I see Holly Rhodes•Teague from the Office for the Aging is with us this morning. Good morning, Holly.

MS. RHODES•TEAGUE:

Hi. I just wanted to speak on the SPAP grant that you're going to be looking at today. It's 100% grant funds, goes from October 1st of '05 to 9/30/06. The funding that •• it's additional funding that was not •• that we didn't have in our budget already, it's another 108,000. The money is being used or has been used to provide assistance to the Medicare beneficiaries for Medicare Part D, and particularly the ones who are EPIC enrollees, because the money was really to assist EPIC enrollees to look at the Medicare Part D Program. So it is 100% funded. It's a short period of time. We have been working with our contractors to use some of that money, and we've used some of it in our office as well. So I'm hoping that you will all be agreeable to that one.

The other thing I just wanted to let you know is that we do have •• I'm happy to report that the { ISEP} funds that were put into the budget last year, we have additional funds this year, that we have new positions in place in our office. Three people have been trained already, and we have another two coming in in another week to be trained, caseworker trainee, and that we are opening up some of the cases on our waiting list, so, you know, we are getting the services out there. So that's a really good thing for us, because I know we've had waiting lists in a lot of areas. So this is good news for us, that we're able to open up more cases and provide more home care.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good. Holly, now that the deadline to enroll in the Part D Program has come and gone, what's been the experience in your office with seniors, their families out in the community. Are you still getting calls? How do you see that going?

MS. RHODES•TEAGUE:

Actually, the phone •• we have •• New York State used to have a hotline for the { HICAP} volunteers, and what they've done is they've taken that hotline and they now just divert the calls by zip code. So, if somebody puts in their a zip code, and the calls come directly to our office for Suffolk County. That phone number is pretty •• still ringing pretty heavily. I think what's happening is that there are letters going out to the low income EPIC enrollees, telling them that they're going to have to enroll, or at least look and enroll in a Medicare Part D Program, even though if they're in EPIC, because there's a lot of things coming down the pike this summer that we're still going to have to deal with. So even though May 15th came and went, there's other deadlines and other things that are going on for the low income EPIC enrollees, so we are still assisting people with the program. And, before

you know it, November 15th will be here and we'll be having an open enrollment period again for the whole program.

So I don't foresee that we're going to have any downtime on this program.

We did hire a new {HICAP} coordinator and we're very pleased. She was up and training this week. And, you know, we're hoping to, you know, push forward with that program, because it's a volunteer program, but, you know, if you don't nurture the volunteers, they won't stay, so we're hoping we'll be able to do good things with that. Okay?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thanks, Holly.

MS. RHODES•TEAGUE:

Yep.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Director Ronayne. How are you.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Good morning. I'm fine, thank you. You?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

I apologize for being a little bit late. We were actually in the office going on on all things budget.

At our last meeting, you would ask me if I would prepare a presentation of sorts on homelessness within the County in the veterans population and I have done that. I do have a •• I have two handouts, if I could, really talking points more than anything else. But I'm happy to say that we've made great progress since our last meeting, working with other agencies and other entities in support of the outreach programs that we're working on for the homelessness.

As the handouts come around, since the last meeting, I've had meetings •• I've had a meeting with Commissioner DeMarzo from DSS and we've agreed to sort of reexamine how we screen people coming in to DSS for veterans status, and if we identify these people, hopefully extract them from the DSS system and put them into something affiliated with VA, which does several things, it opens up another bed in the DSS system for us, so that we can put somebody else in that bed, and it also puts the veteran into an environment where he'll be entitled to •• generally be entitled to benefits and other things that he would not be receiving while within the DSS system. So we've agreed to work on that.

We have continued to work at the Jail. We were at the Jail in Riverhead, most recently on Monday, and we interviewed 17 veterans in the population. Of the 17, we opened files on nine of them for various reasons, requests for discharges, applications for opening of claims, and things of that nature. So the reason I mixed the incarcerated veterans with the homeless issue is that the incarcerated veterans are much more likely to be homeless or become homeless than the population at large. So we sort of include those two populations together.

The VA right now says that Suffolk County is comprised of just about 12% veterans, that the population at large is about 12% veteran. At my meeting with Commissioner DeMarzo, it was revealed that of the 185 individuals within the DSS system right now, 27 of them are veterans, so that brings the number actually, I think it's closer to 15%, which is a little disturbing, because that would suggest that the population, the veterans population is slightly more representative in the homelessness than the 12% that you would •• you would assume.

I've also had a meeting with the Salvation Army, which has a homeless program on the campus at Northport, and I was very, very surprised to learn •• I've always understood that it was a well run facility and that they provided wonderful services, and they have an excellent partnership with the VA. I was very surprised to learn that their operation is intended to operate as an 87•bed facility. They've never had more than 45 residents, which I found very surprising. So there is •• the availability of housing for these veterans is absolutely there. There are more than ample beds for these people, if we can identify them, and we have been. The outreach has been continuing and we have been able to take some people off the street and literally put them into our car and bring them to facilities. We had •• the most recent success was last Friday. So the operation and the efforts are bearing fruit.

On June 15th we'll begin our first of what will be •• and it will be determined on the number of veterans assisted •• requesting the services, we're going to at least once a month, probably twice a month, place a Veterans Service Officer in•house at what they call the Vets Place out in Yaphank. Right now the Vets Place houses approximately 50 veterans in various •• they've got a number of different programs from substance abuse programs to variations of vocational training and education, and right now, there's about 50 people in residence in his buildings.

If you can see in the handout, there is a page and it's titled Profile of Homelessness in the Veterans Population in Suffolk County. I could read through it, if you'd like, for the record. It's pretty self•explanatory and I think it's basic general information, but I think it tells the story. It explains to us what the numbers are and where we think these people are. We just need to do a better job of getting out there and communicating with them and contacting them, and I think that's what we're doing now.

I've also included a copy of the Homelessness Overview from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which some of those numbers are pretty disturbing. They're estimating that on any given day, as many as 200,000 veterans are homeless nationwide. And when you factor the people who over the course of the year have found themselves in temporary homelessness situations, the number actually spikes to close to half a million. Over the course of a year, as many as 500,000 veterans are finding themselves in a homelessness situation for some period of time. It's a number that shouts for attention. Really, there is a need there. And I'm happy to say that I think we're doing a pretty effective job at this point of addressing that need.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Tom, on the one chart, it's VA spending in New York State.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

So, when they say New York, they're combining like all the boroughs in New York?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Which one are you looking at, which chart?

LEG. ALDEN:

The next to last page.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

VA spending in New York State, fiscal year '05?

LEG. ALDEN:

Yeah, fiscal year '05.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

If you look down on the left-hand column, you know, you've got Nassau, so that's Nassau County, I guess, and then New York. Is that five boroughs?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

No. I think each borough was broken up. Yeah, each borough was broken out individually.

LEG. ALDEN:

What would New York be, then, just Manhattan?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

It should be Manhattan.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

New York, it's listed as New York.

LEG. ALDEN:

Because, for 58,000 veterans, the VA expenditure seem like a little bit out of line when you look at Suffolk County has got 100,000 and get 343 million and you've got New York, which, okay, so that's Manhattan, with 58,000 veterans, 593 million dollars spent?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Well, in that number you have to factor in that the 23rd Street VA Regional Medical Center is an enormous, enormous facility. It's also their national cardiac center, so there's a lot of ••

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. So they're servicing people from outside the area, then.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Yeah, yeah, people ••

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

They literally import people from all over the country for their Cardiac Care Program.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. Are we getting our fair share?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

I think Suffolk County is doing all right, if you look at Suffolk County's numbers.

LEG. ALDEN:

If you look at the number of •• I mean, the number of veterans that we have, the veteran population •• and is there a correlation between the population and the expenditures?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

If you look at the first number, the total VA expenditure, the number could be a little bit deceiving, because it does •• there is a bearing on whether or not there is a VA facility in that county ••

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

•• and things of that nature, if they have satellites, if they have vet centers and things of that nature. So that number can be a little bit deceptive. The number that I'd like to look at is the second column, which is the compensation of pension money that comes directly to Suffolk County, and that's all money that is being received by veterans who are receiving various disabilities, compensations for different reasons, pensions. These veterans are receiving this money. This is tax•free money. This is dollar•for•dollar. That's what's going into the pockets of the veterans of Suffolk County and being spent in our communities.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Tom, you had said there are often reasons that veterans won't identify themselves as such in order to receive services. Is there a general trend, is there a general reasoning among veterans why they don't identify themselves as such?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Money. It's money. If a veteran is incarcerated for more than 90 days, if he's receiving a VA pension or compensation, that money will be suspended while he's incarcerated, for the term of his incarceration. The exception to that, and it's tragic, because a lot of guys think that they'll figure out a way of outsmarting the system, if they identify that they have a spouse or dependents, the money would simply be sent to the spouse or dependents. They would change the designated payee and that money would continue. Unfortunately, what these guys do is they don't acknowledge that they're •• they don't acknowledge their veteran status. Their money keeps going into their direct deposit, and after a period of time, the social security number catches up and the VA takes that money back. So, ultimately, they hurt themselves by doing it. But almost without exception it's because of the money.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

At the VA facility in Northport, there are 87 beds that are ••

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

That's in the Salvation Army facility.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Okay.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Which is on the campus at Northport.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Right. And that there is bed availability.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Absolutely. And they also house •• they also house female veterans, which is a challenge. Most of the •• most of the sheltering systems will not accommodate the female veterans.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

You may not know the answer, but that's the bed number. Are you aware as to whether there's sufficient staff to assist those that might come to reside in those beds?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

They are staffed, yes. They're adequately staffed. They have asked if we could •• if we could work with them and maybe direct a couple of volunteers their way, but in terms of actual compensated staff, they're okay.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

I'm interested to know you had met with Commissioner DeMarzo about ways that you can work more closely and, you know, in identifying veterans. What are some of the things that you discussed and some of the things that are going to be implemented in that regard?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Right Now, when you go into the DSS system, you are screened. They do ask you for your veteran status. A couple of things. One thing interestingly is female veterans, it's been shown, when they're asked if they are veterans very often will say no. But, if you change the question and ask, "Did you serve in the armed forces," many of them who've said no to the veteran question will answer yes. I really don't understand why, but for some reason women veterans don't associate themselves with being veterans for whatever the reason. So we're considering perhaps changing the question on the intake.

Also, Commissioner DeMarzo was going to allow us to place our literature in all of their centers, all of their offices. What we need to do is communicate to the going into that system just as with the incarcerated veterans. If you're receiving compensation, there will be a cost associated with your being brought into the DSS system. Your pension will be affected, your compensation will be affected. They would expect you to contribute and fall within the income limits as anybody else would be required to. So, again, it comes down to the money, but if we can convince the veterans going into the

system that it's •• we're not looking to hurt them, we're not looking to take anything away, we're looking to assist them and provide services. If we can do it in such a way that they don't feel, for lack of a better phrase, that we're not picking their pocket, we think that we'll be able to do a better job of identifying them.

We have gone to some of the DSS locations, some of the shelters, and we have found people at the locations who, when we interviewed them, admitted to being veterans, but on the intakes it had not indicated so.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Good morning, Director Ronayne

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Good morning.

LEG. MYSTAL:

How are you? Just a quick question. The other day they had a small news story, I think it was in Newsday •• I mean on News 12 about veterans coming back and finding it very, very hard to find jobs, and they are being ••

and they are unemployed usually, and before they went they had jobs, and when they come back they no longer have a job. And have you got •• did you get any kind •• have you been getting any kind of requests or people calling you.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

We've seen a small number of people who have come back and they've requested, you know, job assistance of different types. Federal law, first of all, protects our reservists and guardsmen. Federal law protects their jobs. When they leave their job, so long as that position continues to exist, the employer must reinstate that person, including what would have been •• any promotions that would have been expected to have occurred, and so forth, as long as the position continues to exist, and that's the side door that some employers use, unfortunately.

There are programs available. We do have employment assistance programs. The VA does have vocational training programs. There are things that we can do. In fact, this coming Sunday morning I'm doing two briefings for the Bravo Company of the First of the 69th, the Fighting 69th. We're doing a post deployment seminar for them explaining •• doing a benefit seminar, explaining what their rights and entitlements are, having just returned. And we're also doing for a second group within the same unit a predeployment briefing for those who are about to be shipped out, and that would cover things like the vocational training, the job protections, the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act, and employment assistance, amongst all of the other things. But the problem is getting the word out. You know, fortunately, we were invited to speak to this group. That doesn't always happen. We don't always get to visit with the units as much as we would like to. So it's an information thing.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Well, quick take on your reason why some returning veterans who are female don't want to identify themselves as veterans. I think it's the word. "Veteran" usually means that you're old, and a woman doesn't want to associate themselves with that. I think that they don't.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

And there are •• there are several definitions of "veteran". One of them is that you served in combat.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Mostly it means that, you know, you've been at something for a very long time, which means you have acquired a lot of age.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Can we call it experience?

LEG. LINDSAY:

Steve.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Service people.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Mr. Presiding Officer.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Really, just to add to this discussion, not so much a comment to

Mr. Romaine, but I'm on the Salvation Army Advisory Board in Suffolk County, so I know a lot about the home in Northport that's run by the Salvation Army, and they do a really good job over there, I've toured it. I haven't heard anything this year, but last year there were some funding problems there and there was a threat of closing it down at different points. Maybe what it would be good for the committee is if I brought in the woman that runs that program over there and she can describe the program and tell us some of the challenges they're having keeping the place operational, and, you know, maybe we could figure out a way of helping her here and there, you know.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

That's great.

P.O. LINDSAY:

But it is a good program, you know, and usually the people that wind up there are people that are in trouble, you know, that are one step away from being homeless, and they treat them with dignity and they try to solve their problems, which I was very impressed with the program.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Debra Rodriguez is the woman that the Presiding Officer is referring to. She does a •• she does and excellent job. She's a very, very committed, very professional person, and given her resources, she does wonders with them.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

We'd love to have her here. Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thanks, Tom. You guys do a great job. And, as a matter of fact, you're expanding it, which is commendable.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

My question to you, I guess, is one I seem to go to on a fairly consistent basis, as far as the level of service that's coming out of the district office in Manhattan at this point. Again, we've talked a little bit about, you know, my own personal experiences with folks, trying to actually access the benefits in the first instance, and anecdotally, what I've heard, as far as the level of staffing that goes on there in the district office and some of the reductions that they've referred to during recent times. What does it look like as far as this operating budget that's coming up, or, in general, what are you experiencing in attempting to get veterans into the system for application for the shelter, or pension, or disability benefits in the first instance?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Simple claims, claims that are whether they're based on presumptives, or if they're just noncomplex claims, we're seeing them turn over in six to eight months. It's not uncommon for 15 months to go by in some instances, if you have cases where you need additional •• additional evidence, additional examinations, additional reports. Again, you're exactly right, it all comes down to the level of staffing. They have not done any laying off, or anything of that nature, it's all through attrition. As people leave, people move on, people retire, they just have not been refilling those positions, and it is resulting in delays, there's no question.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So, at the same time, we're seeing a diminishment of the actual line staff here •• there, yet, we're having an expansion of the pool of individuals who are applying for benefits in the first instance.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Absolutely correct.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And any indication as far as what the funding level is coming forward for the '07 budget or no?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

The funding aside, we haven't heard anything to indicate that they intend to replace any of the people that they've lost over the last several years, which is interesting, because there's such an emphasis being placed on encouraging the returning soldiers and enroll and to avail themselves to VA services. So they're actually volunteering that they would like to increase the pool of veterans that they're serving, yet they're processing the paperwork with fewer people. So, if anything, I would expect that the delays will probably get worse.

LEG. KENNEDY:

During the application process, there's an opportunity for the veteran to actually go ahead and do a face•to•face, I guess, if the claims converted in the first instance. Do they •• does district office personnel ever travel out here, or is it always a hike into Manhattan?

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Since I've been here, I haven't seen anybody from the regional office.

LEG. KENNEDY:

That's interesting. You would think, with such a huge pool between Nassau and Suffolk, they might go ahead and schedule, you know, some times on a monthly basis in order to go ahead and make it a little easier for individuals to have that opportunity.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

If they are, and I'm not saying that they're not, I'm just telling you that in my experience, I have not been made aware of or been exposed to anybody from the RO.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay, thanks.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Eddington.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Yes. Good morning.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Good morning.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

You know, I'm hearing of a pool of veterans. I've read and seen on the T.V. of I think a data base of 22,000 veterans that were misplaced or stolen, and I'm wondering, is there •• I know the Department of Defense often is stingy with giving information. Do we have lists of •• we have 100,000 veterans on Long Island. I'm thinking that if we had a list of veterans in our Legislative district, we could use our newsletters and things to inform them more of some of their rights, so that they would know, if they go to DSS or if they end up incarcerated, that they do have rights. Is there any such list that we can get our hands on ••

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

The only lists that I have and that we have access to that are public information are the individual Town's Assessor's lists for veterans receiving the real property tax exemptions. Those are the only hard files that we're aware of. And the number of records that were misplaced, I think now they are saying that they were stolen, is actually 26.5 million.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Oh, my God.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

In effect, everybody who served or has been separated from the military, or

has a claim or a pending claim since 1975 is included in that •• in that theft.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Well, so then there is a list. I mean, you know, there is a list somewhere.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Well, the VA has that list, but the VA would not •• for privacy reasons, they will not share that information.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Well, I guess that's kind of out of the question now. I mean, the privacy is gone.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

That's a great concern.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Well, maybe at least if you could pursue us getting more information so we could help our veterans in our area, I'd appreciate that.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

I know that the Veterans Administration has stated that are •• I haven't received mine, I don't know if you've received yours, that they were going to send letters to everybody who was included in that •• in that data base. I don't know when these letters are coming out, but I fall within the group being separated after 1975 and I haven't seen a letter yet.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

As long as it doesn't start off with "greetings", I'll be okay.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Just a quick answer for you, Jack. One, for years, Legislators have tried to get their hand on the list of veterans, but one of the reasons why they don't want to give it out is because, also, for years, political parties have tried to get their hand on that list, so they could do private mailings to veterans in election time, so that's one of the reasons why we don't have it.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

If you'd like, I could make arrangements to get members of the committee the Assessors lists. Some of them are quite considerable. I think Brookhaven has some •• it's in the tens of thousands. Town of Huntington I think is close to 12,000. There's a considerable amount of information on there.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

One more question. For those that might not be aware, maybe you could just briefly describe some of the outreach efforts that you're making in identifying homeless veterans in Suffolk County and getting them into the system.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Generally, what we do is we're going out at least one day a week, and I think I had mentioned that at our last meeting that we have partnered with the VA. So when we go out into the field now once a week, the VA actually provides a person from their staff to join us in the field, so the VA is represented. It just •• it helps smooth the process. We identify a community, whatever area, whatever town we plan on visiting, and the protocol that we've established is the first stop is at the local precinct, whichever police precinct has jurisdiction over that community for several reasons. We go in and identify ourselves and let them know who we are, what we're doing, and where we'll be, so they're aware of our presence. If they start getting phone calls or, you know, there's people wandering around in areas that you wouldn't expect to see people wandering around, it's probably going to be us, don't •• you know, don't get upset with us when you have to come out.

Secondly, and probably just as importantly, is those precincts are a tremendous source of intelligence. Nobody knows better than the Police Department where these populations exist, so they can then identify for us where to go; go to the Copiague train station, go to behind such and such shopping center, go behind the Armory in Huntington over at Manor Park. There are any number of places that they would be aware of that us, not being familiar with each community in detail, would have. We'll take their information, and then we also visit within the communities. We'll go to the local community centers, we'll go to the local senior centers. And, literally, if it means walking the tracks, if it means going person to person in the senior centers, you know whatever it takes, we're literally out there walking in the

woods, walking on the sides of the parkways, walking on the sides of the Expressway. These people live in places that you wouldn't imagine. So it truly is, it's a hands•on, just get out there, get dirty and find these people.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Okay. Anybody else? And we'll continue to work on and continue our discussions on how Suffolk County can better provide the services that our veterans need and deserve.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

We appreciate all of your support. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you.

LEG. ALDEN:

I'll look forward to my letter, too.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Okay. Director Ronayne, thanks so much for being with us today.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Thank you.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Introductory Resolutions. ***I.R. 1630 • Accepting and appropriating 100% reimbursable funds for the State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program (SPAP).***

LEG. MYSTAL:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Motion to approve.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Second by Legislator Alden. All in favor? All Opposed? Abstentions? Very good. Nothing further?

LEG. MYSTAL:

You want to put that on the Consent Calendar?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

We have to put that on the consent calendar.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Consent Calendar.

MS. HARRIS:

Yeah, I think it was placed on the Consent Calendar at committee.

LEG. MYSTAL:

It's a hundred percent grant.

MS. HARRIS:

I mean, at ••

LEG. MYSTAL:

Place this on the Consent Calendar.

LEG. ALDEN:

I'll make a motion to put it on the Consent Calendar.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Second.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Second by Legislator Mystal. In favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Very good. Anything further? Any other business? No business. Okay, very good. We are adjourned.

[THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:55 A.M.]

{ } INDICATES SPELLED PHONETICALLY